

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A process of manufacturing membrane-electrode assemblies, said process comprising pressure bonding an electrolyte membrane with electrode substrates to form a membrane-electrode assembly, wherein a good solvent for the electrolyte membrane is applied to at least one of facing surfaces of the opposed electrode substrate and the electrolyte membrane prior to the pressure bonding;

wherein the good solvent is applied in an amount of from 0.001 mg/cm² to 10 mg/cm².

2. (Original) The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein a good solvent for the electrolyte membrane is applied to both of the facing surfaces of the opposed electrolyte membrane and the electrode substrate.

3. (Original) The process as claimed in claim 1 or 2, wherein the electrolyte membrane is a film produced by a film casting method in which a solution of a proton conductive polymer in an organic solvent is flow cast on a substrate and wherein the electrolyte membrane contains the residual solvent in an amount of 5 parts by weight or less based on 100 parts by weight of the proton conductive polymer.

4. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the electrolyte membrane comprises a sulfonated aromatic polymer.

5. (Original) The process as claimed in claim 4, wherein the good solvent for the electrolyte membrane is an aprotic dipolar solvent.

6. (Original) The process as claimed in claim 4, wherein the sulfonated aromatic polymer is a sulfonated polyarylene.

7. (New) The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the electrolyte membrane is a film obtained by reducing an amount of residual solvent in a wet film produced by a film casting method.

8. (New) The process as claimed in claim 7, wherein the amount of residual solvent in the wet film is reduced by soaking the wet film in water.

9. (New) The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the good solvent for the electrolyte membrane is applied to at least the facing surface of the electrode substrate.

10. (New) The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein a pressure in the pressure bonding is in the range of 0.5 to 20 MPa.

11. (New) The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the good solvent is applied in an amount of from 0.01 mg/cm² to 1 mg/cm².